

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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50X1-HUM

SECRET

SECRETAPPENDIX BThe Military Political College at GorkiyIndex

1. Introduction
2. General Information
3. Organisation of the College in 1950-1951
4. [REDACTED]
5. The Senior Officers' Course.
6. The Normal Course.
7. The Correspondence Course
8. The Shortened Junior Officers' Course.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

1. Introduction

b) Material supplied in this Appendix is mostly concerned with the GORKIY Political College, with some information about Armed Forces Political Schools in the USSR.

50X1-HUM

2. General Information

[REDACTED] there were in the Soviet Army four Political Colleges (VOENNO-POLITICHESKOE UCHILISHCHE) which trained Junior Political officers as ZAMPOLITs (Deputy Commanders for political affairs) at Company, Squadron or Artillery Troop level. These Colleges were in LENINGRAD, GORKIY, RYGA and LVOV.

The normal course in all these Colleges lasted two years. The minimum standard of general education required of candidates was seven classes of secondary school. Candidates were selected from NCOs.

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50X1-HUM

SECRET

SECRET

-2-

Appendix B.

Apart from the normal junior officers' courses there were also various special or advanced officers' courses. In autumn 1951 all the Colleges were closed down except for LENINGRAD College, which became the only Army Political College for junior officers. The LENINGRAD College was reorganised on the basis of other officers' schools. The course there lasts three years. The minimum general education standard remains unchanged and candidates are accepted not only from among NCOs, but also from civilian volunteers who succeed in passing all the various checks and examinations. There were also in LENINGRAD some special courses similar to those at the GORKIY College. When the GORKIY College was closed down students were transferred to LENINGRAD and finished their education there.

b) The GORKIY Political College was converted in autumn 1951 into an Officers' Signals College. [redacted] the new GORKIY Signals College will train radar specialists; [redacted] the presence of a radar equipment ordnance factory in the southern outskirts of GORKIY, at "NYZA", near the new Signals College.

50X1-HUM

3. Organisation of the College in 1950-1951

a) The official name of the College was "The Order of the Red Banner GORKIY Military Political College called after Mikhail Vasilievich PRUNZE" (ORDENA KRAENOGO ZNAENI GORKOVSKOE VOENNO POLITICHESKOE UCHILISCHIE IMENI MIKHAYLA VASILIEVITSHA PRUNZE).

The Commanding Officer was Maj. Gen. LATSEV, [redacted] former wartime divisional political officer and member of an Army Military Council. His deputy for political affairs was Col. DYAFONOV. There were also three Counter-Spionage officers, a Colonel in charge of training, officers in charge of various training syndicates (TSIKL), military and civilian lecturers, commanders of companies and courses, and administrative staff.

50X1-HUM

b) During 1950-51 the following courses were carried out at the GORKIY Political College:

- i) Two-year normal Junior Political Officers' Course.
- ii) One-year shortened Junior Political Officers' Course.
- iii) A special political course for Red Greek officers.
- iv) Six-months' Senior Artillery Political Officers' Course.
- v) Three-months' course for students taking a political correspondence course.

The College trained chiefly political staff of artillery and tank units.

c) The College occupied a large barracks situated on the eastern side of the SHCHERBINNA road on the southern outskirts of the town of GORKIY. The newly built College Club was outside the barracks opposite the College main gate. (See Annex 1 to Appendix A.) [redacted]

50X1-HUM

All courses lived in similar conditions. Students were accommodated in large halls, one for each course. Officers students had a separate dining hall. All students were adequately fed and, except for the officers, wore the usual Officers' School uniforms.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

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SECRET

SECRET

50X1-HUM

-3-

Appendix B

50X1-HUM

5. The Senior Officers' Course

In autumn 1950 a six-months' course for senior officers was started. There were about 120 senior officers from various artillery units. Their course of study was similar to the normal two or one year courses but much shortened. They concentrated on political matters and on artillery tactics and equipment.

6. The Normal Course

There were about 600 students on the normal two-year course, divided into two equal groups - Artillery and Tanks. Their programme was similar to the shortened one-year course and the only difference between the courses was that the students of the two-year course did not work as intensively as their colleagues on the one-year course. The only subject which was taken only in the two-year course was Political Economy.

7. The Correspondence Course (ZAOCHNY KURS)

This course was organised in 1951 and lasted three months. The course was for students serving in their units who studied political work by means of the correspondence course and for the last three months were called to the College. They attended various lectures and underwent practical training and then passed the normal examinations. After the examinations they became junior political officers.

8. The Shortened Junior Officers' Course

a) [] the aim of the shortened political courses was to produce as quickly as possible an adequate number of trained junior political officers and thereby to put an end to the shortage of political staff. Candidates for this course were selected from among senior NCOs in artillery and tank units, who had a good service record, were Party members, were approved of by the FONTRAEVLENA and had

50X1-HUM

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SECRET

SECRET



- 4 -

Appendix B

50X1-HUM

finished at least seven classes of general education.

b) The Course consisted of one artillery troop (about 120 students) and one tank company (about 100 students). About 15% of the students had completed a secondary education; some of these had started University studies. Some 80% had finished 7-9 classes of secondary school, and about 5% had only completed six classes. About 80% of the students were Russians, 15% were Ukrainians and Belorussians, and the remainder were Jews, Georgians and one single Chuvash. The students were chiefly from the units of the MOSCOW, BELORUSSKIY and GORKIY Military Districts, plus quite a number from the Army Group in Germany.

c) The Commanding Officer of the Course was Lt. Col. MARTYNOV, Hero of the Soviet Union. The artillery troop Commander was Capt. VERETYUK, a Jew.

Lt. Col. MARTYNOV, Capt. VERETYUK, the tank company Commander, and the platoon commanders carried out purely administrative duties. All matters concerning the course of studies were in the hands of the lecturers, syndicate senior officers, and the Colonel in charge of training. There was no difference between the gunners and the troopers from the tank company except that the former studied artillery and the latter tank tactics. All other subjects were identical.

d) Training

The main syndicates (TSIKL) were:

Theory of Marxism-Leninism
Party Political Work
Gunnery and Tanks
Artillery and Tank unit tactics.

There were, however, many other military and general subjects. The total working hours during the year were approx. 2,600-2,700, including tactical exercises and firing practice.

(i) Theory of Marxism-Leninism (approx. 800 hours)

This was based on the "Short Course in the History of the VKP(b)", including Chapter XIII (The period between the XVII Party Conference and 22nd June 1941), Chapter XIV (The LENIN-STALIN Party during the Great Fatherland War) and Chapter XV (The LENIN-STALIN Party in the struggle for the Recovery of the National Economy).

(ii) Party Political Work in the Armed Forces (approx. 240 hours)

The main points covered by this subject were the duties of ZAMPOLITs in general and, in particular: organisation of unit political activities; political lectures and exercises (POLITZANYATIYA); political information on current events (POLITINFORMATSIYA); selection of topics (PODBOR TEMATIKI); and planning of political work. In addition there were lectures on the direction and administration of Party and Komsomol organisations. The duties of a ZAMPOLIT (Deputy Commander for Political Affairs) were discussed in detail.

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SECRET

SECRET

50X1-HUM

- 5 -

Appendix B

So far as relations with the Commander and officers were concerned, the ZAMPOLIT recruits were trained to regard themselves as subordinate to the Commander in all military questions. If they disagreed with the Commander on such questions they were to endeavour to persuade him on a friendly basis and, only if that failed, were they to seek assistance by going to the next level in the ZAMPOLIT chain of command. This aspect of the course gave rise to considerable discussion, because many of the students who had had war experience of political work argued that the ZAMPOLIT ought to have much more authority over military matters. But this point of view was sternly discouraged. As regards relations with the men, the stress was laid on the duty of the ZAMPOLIT to know the soul of every man; this should be achieved not by formal interviews, but by informal talks on every possible opportunity with the men in the course of their military duties. The future ZAMPOLITs were told how they were to deal with the troubles that the men would bring to them, the type of answers that they ought to give and the explanations that should prove convincing. The general attitude was: the ZAMPOLIT must be able to convince completely by his answers and to dispel all doubts, otherwise he is not fit for his job. There was no discussion during the course of such questions as defection, leaflets or foreign broadcasts.

The study of the duties of a ZAMPOLIT included lectures on the procedure for the admittance of new members to the Party and to the Komsomol, as well as how to select them. A separate subject was "Duties of a ZAMPOLIT in the field" (e.g. troops in action, in advance and in retreat, political work during rest, in the summer camps, etc.). Students were also instructed how to organise entertainments on Saturdays and Sundays: choirs, dancing, etc. [redacted] how to instruct platoon commanders in their political duties.

50X1-HUM

The practical exercises included editorial work on wall news-sheets and front line leaflets (BOYEVOM LISTOK). There were also discussions on various subjects. Students took part in the college and course Party meetings and in the ceremony of admittance to the Party of some of their colleagues, as well as of some of their lecturers and officers.

Students were also instructed, in general terms, on duties of ZAMPOLITs on the regimental and divisional levels.

iii) Gunnery (ARTSTRELBA) (approx. 500 hours)

This subject dealt with both the theoretical and practical aspects of gunnery, artillery equipment and ammunition. Students were trained in the selection of gun sites, in manning guns and in gun drill. Firing practice took place at the GOROKHOVETSKIE shooting range (about 75 km N.E. of GORKIY), where students spent about four days. Each of them fired 3-7 shells from 76 mm and 122 mm howitzers. The tank company had their firing practice in the same area, using T-34 tanks.

iv) Tactics (approx. 400 hours)

This consisted of artillery troop tactics and the work was carried out entirely in the field. The tactical training included the study of the organisation of the Soviet Armed Forces, the war establishment of certain types of artillery and tank units; there were also lectures, including secret material, on the organisation of foreign armies, and in particular of the [redacted] armed forces.

50X1-HUM

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SECRET

50X1-HUM

SECRET

- 6 -

Appendix Bv) Topography (approx. 40 hours)

This included map reading, conventional signs, grid bearings, etc. Training was carried out in the field.

vi) Signals (approx. 30 hours)

Training included the construction and manning of telephone apparatus (type "TAI-43") and of W/T stations (types "A7-B", RB-5" and RBM").

[redacted] this subject was rather neglected.

50X1-HUM

vii) Engineering (approx. 40 hours)

This included field works, in particular digging of gun pits, construction of command observation points, bridging and river crossing, and mine-laying. There were also some lectures on movement of troops.

viii) Chemical Warfare (approx. 12 hours)

This was badly neglected. There were a few lectures on chemical warfare and the students spent a couple of hours learning about respirators.

ix) Motor Transport (AVTODELO) (approx. 60 hours)

Students were told about the structure of motor vehicle engines and had twelve hours of practice in driving "GAZ 51".

x) Army Manuals and Military Law (approx. 30 hours)xi) Physical Training and Drill (approx. 80 hours)xii) Military History (approx. 40 hours)

This consisted of a short course on military history from Alexander the Great and the Roman Empire to the Battle of BERLIN in 1945. The lecturer, a major, had a very good method of teaching history [redacted]

50X1-HUM

xiii) Geography (approx. 150 hours)

The course included the physical, economic and political geography of the U.S.S.R. and the whole world.

50X1-HUM

xiv) History of the Soviet Union (approx. 240 hours)

A full course from the 10th century to the present day. The lectures were based on a text-book of the History of the U.S.S.R. by A.M. PANKRATOVA.

xv) Russian Language (approx. 60 hours)

50X1-HUM

[redacted] Russian language, in particular composition, was the weak point of nearly 80% of the students. During the course they improved very considerably.

xvi) Russian Literature (approx. 40 hours)

This included Russian classics of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and was not a subject of examination.

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SECRET

SECRET

- 7 -

Appendix Be) Examinations and postings

The course was divided into two six-month terms. After the first term students took examinations in all subjects. Between the end of the term and the examinations they had four days' leave which they spent preparing for the examinations.

Before the end of the second term two political officers (majors), one from artillery and the other from tanks, arrived from the Chief Political Directorate of the Ministry of Defence and interviewed all students, asking each student about his future plans and where he wished to be posted. This was only a formality, because the majority of students had already been posted to the Army Group in Germany. The only exceptions were those who had serious reasons for asking to be posted inside the U.S.S.R., and Jews, who were informed "in a cultured way" (IM KULTURNO SKAZALI) that there were no vacancies in Germany and that they were to be posted to Asia.

The Final examinations were oral and included the History of the VKP(b), political work among troops, and tactics. The Examination Board was presided over by Maj. Gen. LATSEV and the members were the Deputy Commander for Political Affairs, the lecturers concerned and representatives from H.Q. GORKIY Military District. During the examinations on Tactics the Commanding General of the Military District was present in person. 50X1-HUM

[] the results of the course were considered very satisfactory. On 29th April 1951 all students were commissioned and were granted a month's leave and then returned to the College, where they were issued with the necessary documents and proceeded to their destinations.

f) Internal discipline and amenities

Internal discipline in the College was very strict. Students were kept very busy and had very little time to themselves. Even on Saturday afternoons and Sundays they often worked voluntarily. Apart from their course of study they were sometimes engaged in political activities outside the College, such as visiting factory workers, making speeches on various occasions, attending official parades, etc. During the course they had only four days' leave, but almost all of them stayed in the College working for the exams. One could obtain compassionate leave provided that one had very serious reasons for it. There was a College Club opposite the College premises, where students ([]) could spend their free hours. Spirits were not allowed either in the mess or in the Club, but vodka and beer were obtainable at the Club through "special channels". 50X1-HUM

There were dancing parties at the Club during which one could easily get properly drunk. [] there were hundreds of girls from various local offices and factories who were known as "members of the College". They had their boy-friends among the students of each course. In some cases students married their College girl-friends and, as there are no obstacles to marriage in the Soviet Army, except political ones, some of these girls, after "attending" several courses, became wives of ZAMPOLITS. 50X1-HUM

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SECRET

50X1-HUM

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